2:Ling & Ruey-310 E-5 (1933) 1947 AE5 Miao AE5

CHAPTER NINE

THE DRUM DANCE AND AMUSEMENTS

(I) The Drum Dance

*535 [181] Although the culture of the Miao in western Hunan is comparatively backward, some of the primitive traits that are preserved today are not entirely without merit. For example, [526] the drum dance and boxing both are worth preserving, especially the drum dance which attracts most attention. Recording the drum dance of the Miao, Miao Fang-pei Lan, "Feng-shu [534] Kao," states: "They cut a tall tree, hollow out the inside, and seal the two ends with animal skins to make a drum. Pretty women are asked to dance and beat on it. They select good men and women singers, who are clad in theatrical clothes in [292] all colors, or wrapped in red blankets, with kerchiefs on the heads and two strips of colored paper trailing behind the back. Men to the left and women to the right, they spin and sing, responding to each other, now raising their arms, now stamping their feet slowly or rapidly in unison to the rhythm of the music. This is called the drum dance." This account is a [782] description of the drum dance during the great Miao sacrificial ceremony of eating ox. In recent times the local governments [654] have repeatedly prohibited licentious rites among the Miao, and so dances such as the drum dance are now rarely held. Those Miao with some education, the so-called enlightened [186] Miao, feel ashamed when talking about their drum dance, because they consider it as exposing their barbaric traits. Some decades from now this kind of drum dance, which so clearly demonstrates their own tribal nature, may become extinct. Following are described in detail the results of our investigations.

[184] The drum dance of the Miao in Hunan is called "monkey drumming." The Hung Miao /Red Miao/ in the vicinity of Tung-jen in Kweichow also have a kind of drum dance called

8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5

There is also the family in the largest sense, which we may call the clan. All male persons of the same name, whether or not they are related to the others by birth, their unmarried daughters, their wives and the wives of their male descendants, are regarded as related. A person can remain indefinitely in the home of a family to which he is not related by birth but having the same family name and he pays nothing for his food and does not easily wear out his welcome. It is considered a crime for two persons having the same family name to marry although there is no known relationship. There are certain memorial ceremonies in which all partipate who have the same family name, for all such are regarded as blood relatives, especially if they can trace their descent to the same legendary ancestor.

There is another way in which relationship is reckoned. Certain male relatives of a girl may have sexual relations with her without marriage and a man may enjoy sexual relations with certain female relatives as a matter of course and it is considered legitimate and proper, nobody raising any objections. It must not be with relatives of the same name. In Chinese they are called guest-wives and guest-husbands and in Ch'uan Miao the guest-wives are called ɔɜʌu Ma· and the guest-husbands are called ndˢʌu la·. A man's guest-wives are the daughters of his mother's brothers and of his father's sisters. A girl's guest-husbands are the sons of her father's sisters and of her mother's brothers. Copulation with guest-wives and guest-husbands takes place before marriage without opposition from the parents or relatives and often it goes on secretly after marriage. There is a Ch'uan Miao proverb,

"A woman has ten husbands,
A man has ten wives."

Recently, both among the Hua Miao and the Ch'uan Miao the Christian husbands and fathers, wives and mothers and other relatives have been opposing this custom, but many of the non-Christian guest-husbands have been unwilling to give up their inherited privileges and have raised trouble about it. There have been quarrels and fights and in some cases the persons endeavoring to bring about a reform have been obliged to secure the help of Chinese officials.

Furthermore, there is a feeling of fellowship, friendship and relatedness among all the Ch'uan Miao that results in a spirit of helpfulness and cooperation. It is said that no Ch'uan Miao need starve to death unless there is a drought or famine. If one family is destitute other Miao families will each contribute some food or other necessity and the poor family will be able to get along.

[163 cont.]

186 631 648 It is fitting, however, to point out the repugnance with which the "Méo" accept being subordinated to "Thai" chiefs, even though this subordination is of the lightest kind and applies only to rare acts of ordinary living: the payment of taxes, the furnishing of labor details, and so on. In this repugnance must be seen only a manifestation of the spirit of independence with which the "Méo" are so deeply imbued.

631 648 In other communes, by contrast (Pha-Long, and so on), the "ly-truong" are of the "Méo" race and they hold the administrative authority over "Thai" and "Man" groupings settled upon the territory of these communes.

175 There is not now in Tonkin a "Méo" chief above the rank of "ly-truong." However, legend preserves the memory of a personage by the name of Sioung, calling himself the "King of the Méo," who established himself in the region of Yen Minh about the year 1860, an epoch corresponding to the second violent invasion of the "Méo," spoken of at the beginning of this chapter.

This King Sioung showed himself to be most bloodthirsty in the war he carried on for some ten years against the "Thai" of the regions of Quan-Ba, Yen-Minh, and Dongvan, and was killed by myrmidons in the pay of his father-in-law (1).

1. Also it is fitting to indicate a movement of insurrection fomented in 1911 among the "Méo" of Dong Quong by a chief who took the name of Sioung. This revolt was quickly suppressed. During the war of 1914-1918, an uprising of the "Méo" of Upper Laos caused the dispatch of an expeditionary column, which re-established order.

631 648 There still exists in our time, in the Chinese region contiguous to the Thanthuy sector, a personage improperly called "King of the Méo," who is none other than a "Méo" chief invested by the Chinese

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833 scratching, biting the eyelashes, nose-rubbing, in brief, the elements that play such a significant role among some inhabitants of the South Seas.

In contrast to the complicated overtures, the sexual act itself is simple and almost primitive. This is all the more strange in view of the fact that, unlike other peoples, there are no religious prohibitions to compel limitations in this respect, and otherwise the Meau are very imaginative. Nevertheless, they definitely reject all variations, in which, as is known, their Chinese neighbors are so unrivaled. The woman always lies on her back with her legs extended or slightly bent; the man lies on top of her, body against body, and their cheeks touch. Other positions are in part unknown and in part rejected. The Meau say of the Yau, who prefer the reverse position of
● [186] the woman: "They copulate like dogs, this is not good for human beings." -- After the ejaculation both partners sleep a while, and then the girl gets up softly and prepares a meal for her friend from provisions that she has brought along; they eat, and the love play begins anew.

836 The settlement of love intrigues is interesting and characteristic of the attitude of the Meau. If it becomes known that a girl has several lovers, the latter ask her jointly whose love she enjoyed first. The others then withdraw without protest, and a young man would never think of competing with another for his girl.

577 As long as sexual intercourse does not result in pregnancy
836 no one thinks of marriage. An attempt is made, only for the sake of public opinion, to keep all love affairs secret. In such matters no one will censure a lie, which is otherwise so strictly condemned by the Meau. Now, the villages of the Meau in northern Thailand are small, moreover, the members of the village community are subject to the marriage prohibition, since most of them are related by blood or belong to the sib. Hence, the young men must often walk for hours or days to reach their beloved. If a young man then returns home dead-tired and his father, as is unlikely, should ask him where

AKha A04
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A M 533 832 [621] [186] among both peoples good singers always find special approval among the girls. It should also be pointed out that /140/ a pronounced love for one's native village runs through many of the love songs, which would not be expected among either the Meau or Akha, since both, as seminomadic peoples, often change their habitation sites. One might assume, therefore, that no special attachment to their villages would develop, but since the opposite is the case, it seems to indicate that the nomadic inclination of these peoples is only a secondary development (see the chapter, "Cultural Change and Colonial-Ethnological Problems among the Mountain Peoples in Thailand," section on "Causes of the Migrations").

M 539 832 The most impressive are the love songs of the Meau, which sometimes betray a really lyrical feeling:

"I came to your village in order to love you, but you would not even speak to me; this has made my heart sick with pain."

"I am a strong young man. Oh, why will you not hold my hand?" (Here the singer complains that the girl came to the rendezvous, but now is unwilling to surrender.)

"I visited you in your house, but you did not love me, so I am leaving."

"Now I have come to you, and if you will only stroke my neck, I shall be happy for several years, even if you do not grant me anything else."

"Speak only two words, and I shall be happy for a long time" (the "two words" mean a confirmation of love in return).

"I came to your house; why did you not offer me a cold drink?" (Girls present a "cold drink," that is, water, to the friend toward whom they are favorably inclined. Liquor is regarded as a very obvious invitation.)

M [273] "I came to your house, in front of which there is a tree with three fruits. Eat only one fruit, the others are poisonous!" (The singer has heard that his sweetheart has two other friends and warns her.)